

"Get me to the Church on Time"

by Dick Hatfield, Ohio Rep

If you want to see the Four Freshmen in church, you'll need to arrive about two hours early to get a seat.

That's the way it was February 20th at the Burnt Store Presbyterian Church in Punta Gorda, Florida. Every pew was full an hour before show time. It was a sellout. To pass the waiting time, a church lady at the Steinway led all 750 of us in a thirty five minute sing-along with lyrics posted on two giant screens on either side of the altar.

When Bob, Vince, Brian, and Curtis began the liturgy at 7:30pm, I've never heard them sound better. The speaker system and acoustics in that church were studio quality. They could have made an album there. And FFS state rep. Elmer Schroeder would have sold a ton of them in the narthex. He and his crew had a busy night.

I don't know what it is about the Presbyterians here in Florida, but they know how to do music. Two days before the Freshmen concert, Kathy and I saw the Harry James Orchestra, directed by Fred Radke, at the Venice Presbyterian Church. Again, two sold out concerts, and with the band was an outstanding chanteuse by the name of Barbara Rosene. And last year we caught Mark Murphy at the Trinity Presbyterian church in Venice.

Maybe we society members should talk to our clergy about future Freshman concerts. It's a great way to go to church.

Fresh News is published quarterly © 2011, all rights reserved, celebrating THE FOUR FRESHMEN, the best vocal/instrumental quartet in the world. Publication does not imply approval of FFS corporate directors or trustees. Each author is responsible for his/her article.

Deadlines for consideration of articles:

1. Jan/Feb/March - Dec 15
2. Apr/May/June - March 15
3. July/Aug/Sept - June 15
4. Oct/Nov/Dec - Sept 15

Submit manuscripts to the Editor:

Tom Purvis

tpurvis@bex.net

Four Freshmen Bring Talents to Three Stages

By Eileen Wilson, Telegraph Correspondent

The latest incarnation of the vocal group "The Four Freshmen" will appear at Three Stages Performing Arts Center on Sunday. The original group was formed more than 60 years ago. The current four have been performing together for more than 10 years.

Though the adjective, "freshman" implies that someone is a novice at his or her art, the Four Freshmen, who will appear for one performance only at Three Stages Performing Arts Center on Sunday, Feb. 12, are anything but amateurs. The Four Freshmen group was formed more than 60 years ago as a barbershop quartet. Through experimentation with jazz harmonies, the group has influenced the music world, including groups like the Beach Boys in the 1960s.

Today's incarnation of the long-time group include Bob Ferreira, Brian Eichenberger, Curtis Calderon and Vince Johnson — talented musicians who have been performing together for more than ten years.

The years spent rehearsing and performing together really shows.

"We are the second longest tenured group in the Four Freshmen's history," said Bob Ferreira. "We really blend musically." Craig Burnett, president of Folsom Lake Community Concert Association, is thrilled to bring the renowned group to Folsom.

"They were a last-minute add to our season — Three Stages actually held the program printing for us until we were able to secure the group. They are just great, and we're really excited about them coming here," Burnett said. "We have sold over 800 tickets."

Many Four Freshmen enthusiasts are excited, also. "I've had so many people call, saying they are huge fans, and asking for tickets," Burnett said. It's easy to see why the group has developed a following that crosses generations. Burnett describes the men as "gentlemen". "They're well dressed, well spoken, and hold the tradition of the original Four Freshmen," he said. But it's the music that keeps fans coming back. From the stirring harmony of the Beach Boys' iconic *Surfer Girl*, each member adding crystalline notes, to the jazzy, up-tempo *There Will Never be Another You*, a blast back to the 1940s, no group has better tonal quality, matched by a charm and charisma that can thrill an audience.

While Burnett said average fans are in their 50s, there's something in the group's repertoire for all ages.

"We use the Great American Songbook — classic, standard songs that everyone will know," Ferreira said. "The audience will love the music — they are wonderful arrangements. Half of our songs are older classics, and about half are songs that have been arranged by the current members of the group. We cover a lot of tunes in our hour and a half show."

While the harmonies are exquisite, the group is comprised of masterful musicians, as well.

"It's hard to classify ourselves. We are a four-part harmony, but we also have a jazz-based sound," Ferreira said. "The harmony is intricate, complex, and we back ourselves up instrumentally."

However you classify them, the group is renowned for their enthusiasm and passion for a good time.

"We have a lot of energy. We have a lot of fun. We love what we do, and that really shows," Ferreira said. "We're really excited to come up to Folsom and we hope the audience will enjoy us as much as we enjoy them."

